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[Despatch Abstract.]

EDUCATION : EDUCATION FOR ALL AGE IN USSR : CUTTING FRO[illegible] : INDIA'S LETTER : RECORDED.

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9-12-53

No.D.4453/47.E.II.
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION.

New Delhi,3, dated the 7th January 1948.

From
Sri S.S. Bhatnagar, O.B.E., D.Sc., F.R.S.,
Secretary to the Government of India.

To
The Secretary to the Government of Madras, Education and Public Health Department,
Madras.

Subject: EDUCATION FORALL-AGE- Old Dream realised in USSR - Cutting from the "Moscow News" dated the 29th October 1947 - Received from the Embassy of India - Moscow.

- - - -

Sir,

I am directed to forward herewith for information a copy of a cutting from the "Moscow News" mentioned above, containing an article by N. Sergenvey, received from the Indian Embassy, Moscow.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
d/- for Secretary.

EDUCATION FOR ALL AGE - OLD DREAM REALISED IN USSR.
Progress Scored in Past 30 years is without Parallel
By N. SERGEYEY.

THERE has been of late a tendency among certain statemen to expatiate again upon the contrast between "western" and "eastern" culture. As a matter of fact, quite a number of these genlemen picutre this contrast as one between a positive entity and naught. In other words, the so-called "eastern" culture - and by this, of course, Russian and Soviet culture is meant - is depicted as non-existent. Strangely enough, this amounts to a reversion to Hitlerite ragins by some people who actively fought Hitlerism, or at least went through the motions of doing so. For was it not Hitler who told his soliders that there was "no culture to speak of" east of their front line.

No thinking person will deny that popular literacy as taught in the primary schools is the foundation of culture. However, one can build a number of things on the same foundations. It may be a jail, a house or a temple. Literacy as such is culturally indispensable, but not sufficient. Weren't all the monsters who invaded us on June 22, 1941, literate? However, their Kultur had nothing to do with culture.

It is the high school and the college that are the principal determinants of culture because they instill ideas into the minds of the young people who have learned in primary schools to receive them through the written world.

GOOD INDEX.

The efforts and interest of society in the improvement of the education of all its members is perhaps the best criterion of its culture. It thus would seem not amiss to take a look at what Soviet power has done in this respect during the first thirty years of its existence.

Anti- Sovient writers and jounralists, renegade Social-Democrats and Russian emigress are trying to din it into the ears of the people abroad that after all under the old reigme "a lot" was done for the education of the Russain people and that, therefore, the achievements of the Soviet state in this domain are nothing but a continuation of the same process and should not be considered a credit to the new system.

At this point one would do well to search the Russain Archives for pronnouncements of Russian statemen on the subject of education.

At the head of the list comes Tsar Alexander III who once said that high schools were not "for the sons of cooks". Minister of Education Delianov echoed him and elaborated on the idea. Said Delianov in an official departmental circular: "The Children of cooks, male and female, butlers, small shopkeepers, etc., should be accepted neigher in colleges and higher institutions of learning, nor in high schools."

When the city of Cheringov applied for permission to open a new high school, the Minister of Education answered that such permission would not be granted until it was proved that the children of the gentry and the landlords needed such a school, becuase "we are not going to build schools for the children of riffraff."

Emigre General Golovic in his book "The Russain Army in the (First) World War" writes that before the war only about 27% of the army recruits were literate. And General Golovin certaily cannot be suspected for a desire to slander the old regime.

As a matter of fact, other official old regime statistics show that less than 30% of the opulation of Russia could read and write. Culture was shut off from close to 130 million people by the iron curtain of complete iliteracy. Only eight million youngsters before the Revolution attended any kind of school while many millions had to say out for lack of facilities and means. Of the many nationalities which compose the Soviet Union some 40 had no alphabet at all before the Revolution and were for that reason dubbed "letterless."

This was what the Soviet Government inerited in the realm of general popular culture when it took over the reins 30 years ago.

As in every other field of constructive endeavour, education has been on the upgrade in the Soviet Union every since. The only exception was the time when the war was on and schools were being destroyed and children and teachers killed by the German invaders.

But to go over the basic facts.

It probably sounds somewhat trite to reemphaisze the obvious fact that Soviet schools are open to all children and young people and that the social and economic status of their parents has nothing whatever to do with the opport nities of their children. Howe er, the fact remains that eduction in the Socviet Union is open to all. There are no private schools where extra money can buy a diploma and where rich youngsters can enjoy better facilities and greater comfort than the children of the poor.

It is most notewrothy that the curve of the increase of education in the formerly backward areas is rising more steeply than the one in Russia, the Ukraine and other more advanced republics. Perhaps the efforts toward educating the backward peoples give the best illustration of what the Constitution means when it says that citizens of the USSR are guranteed the right to education. Now, in the USSR, there are no "class A" and "class B" citizens. Chukcha and Dungan have the same rights as Russian and Ukrainian and Armenian.

However, this concept was no easy matter to put into practice. Imagine several score nationalities who had no alphabet. The answer sounds early: create an alphabet for them. So far, so good. But then you have to write dozens of text-books. And what about the hundres and thousands of words to which no corresponding concept exists not only in the language, but in the very minds of the people who are about to ~~the~~ be educated? What about "preposition" and "paragraph" for a people who never wrote before? "Zebra and "palm tree" for a tribe which roams on reindeer beyond the Arctic Circle? "Piston" and "potential" for Evenkis and Chukchi who only knew reindeer legs as motive power and who never had an idea that such a thing as physics ever existed? All this - books, words, letters and concepts - had to be created. A tremendous job in itself! The children of nomadic parents study in boarding schools especially created for them. They are fed and clothed by the state.

We mention here only the northern people, but what is being done for the inhabitants of the tundra is also extended to the mountains on the Pamirs, the fastnesses Transcaucasia and the hot desserts of Turkmenia. The results is that there are no more means of the written world. An achievement which might provoke a modicum of envy among same Kentucky mountaineers and denizens of the Louisiana bayous

The opening up of the avenues of education by the Soviet Revolution is clearly reflected by satistics on shool attendance. During the first 23 years of the existence of the Soviet State, i.e. between 1917 and World War II, the number of youngsters in schools increased from 8 million to close to 35 million. During the decade preceding the war 60,000 new schools were built.

The number of schools destroyed by the Germans and by military action was ~~tremendous~~ tremendous, but today most of them have been rebuilt or restored. The size of the effort invested into this work which was given high priority shows what importance is attached in the Soviet Union to education.

But figures giving the number of schools and students reflect only part of the picutre. They show that all must study and are given an opportunity to do so. But what do they learn?

First of all Soviet youngsters are taught in school to be human beings and to consider all other human beings as their equals. Russian and Tatar, Ukrainian and Uzbek, Komi and Kara-Kalpak sit together and it does not enter a single child's head that such proximity is either a disgrace, or, for that matter, an honour. The equality of all races and nationalities is simply taken for granted.

There is, however, one respect in which the formerly backward Asiatic people are not treated equally with their more advanced bfothers they get more schools and proprotionately greater sums ~~of~~ are being spent for the benefit of the children of those who agenera-tion ago were almost universally illiterate. Far from excluding the Asiatic peoples from the boon of education, the Soviet Government is doing everything equickly to raise them to the level of their European compatriots.

The seoond thing Soviet youngsters learn in school is that selfless service to society is the duty of each citizen. It is often said that the Soviet system teaches that the State is every thing and the individual nothing. This is a complete misrepre-sentation. On the contrary, the human being is looked upon as th most important and valuable thing in the world. All efforts are bent to the goal of making him as happy as possible. At the same time, the individual is taught right in school that the interest of the many should have priority over his own, selfish interest.

The third thing distinguishing the Soviet school from most other is that nothing is taught which does not stand the test of "Science. "Scentific" has become the synonym of "true."

No "monkey trial" of a Soviet Scopes is thinkable. The theory of evolution, for one, is part of science and is being taught as such without evasions or falsifications.

To sum up, the Soviet Government spends 13 per cent of the national income to make education truly universla, humane and scientific. Be it remarked in passing that the United States spends 1.5 per cent and Britian 3 per cent.

United States Attorney General Tom Clark recently said that millions of American children do not attend school, that three million adults never went to school, and that 10 million got such a defective education that they must be considered illiterate. By the way, the draft during the last war brought to light some azaming data on that question.

The ranks of schoolteachers in the Soviet Union grow every

year. Before the war there was 1,200,900 teachers. Three hundred thousand future pedagogues study in 1,000 pedagogic institutes and special schools. Meanwhile in the United States in recently years half a million teachers switched professions because they found their work did not pay.

HIGHER EDUCAT

The development of primary and secondary education in the Soviet Union naturally gave a powerful impetus to the growth of the system of institutions of higher education. Today there are countless ordinary workers' familieswhose chiddren are physicians, engineers, actors, etc.

In the past 30 years the number of colleges, universities and institutes has grown from 91 to 800, while the number of students in them has increased from 112,000 to 670,000.

Thirty years ago only 4.5% of the students of eight Russian universities were the children of workers and peasants. Today they form the overwhelming majority.

More than one-third of Soviet students were deprived of their Alma Maters when the Germans destroyed 384 institutions of higher learning. Today most of them have been restored and, furthermore, over 100,000 veterans form almost one-sixth of the Soviet student body. Neither did Soviet colleges and universities jack up their tuition fees after the war as most American institutions did in order to make a profit. Out of the veterans who wish to make up for the time they spent fighting. On the contrary, Soviet war veterans are given all sorts of privileges and many are exempt from paying tuition fees (which are extremely low in any case.)

The professional body has grown from 6,000-odd in 1914 to 65,000 which means, by the way, that there are fewer students to each professor and that the former can get better attention. There are thousands of women among the professors and instructors.

NATIONAL EQUALITY.

National equality, of course, reigns supreme in the Soviet higher school. For instance, while the Ukraine will give 110,000 graduates during the current five-year plan, the Central Asian republics will muster 85,000

Perhaps one of the greatest incentives for acquiring a higher education in the Soviet Union is absolute assurance of a good job. As Molotov pointed out recently, it would be a hopeless tak to look for a jobless scientist or specialist in the Soviet Union. "should anybody find an unemployed scientist in our country we should give that man a premium", he said.

These are some of the things of which the Soviet state can boast on its 30th anniversary. Its achievements in the realm of public education are perhaps among the most remarkable.

In the police jargon ofold Russia, students were called "internal enemies", along with "Jews, Polacks" and "other non- Russians". Today students are the hope of the country, irrespective of their nationality or colour. Students were considered trouble-makers in the old days. Perhaps they are that today too, but now they make trouble only for old Mother Nature whom they prod ceaselessly to give more and more of her hidden riches to the human race.

FACTS AND FIGURES.

ONE out of every three people in the USSR studies. A total of 50 million children. youth and adults attended school on the eve of the World War II.

TWENTY-FOUR per cent of the population of Tsarist Russia was literate according to the 1897 Census. By 1920 the percentage of literacy had risen to 32. In 1936,

49 per cent and in 1934,

90per cent of the population of the USSR could read and write. As a result of the enforcement of universal compulsory education, the number of illiterates has dropped still lower, and today there are no young people who cannot read and write.

** ** **

SOME 60,000 new schools were built in the USSR during the Stalin five-year plans prior to the late War. Expenditure for public education in that period amounted to more than 100,000 million rubles. The present annual appropriations for public education are nearly 15 times more than before the Revolution.

* ** **

EVERY educational institution is open to the children of all citizens of the Soviet Union. In 1948 alone the number of pupils in elementary and secondary schools increased by 2,400,000 Today there are some 80 million school children in the USSR - four times more than before the Revolution.

** ** **

In 1906 the magazine "Vestnik Vospitaniya" (Education Herald) estimated that under the conditions existing at that time it would take 270 years before illiteracy was completely eliminated in Russia.

** ** **

THE OVERHWELMING majority of children in pre-revolutionary Russia received no more than an elementary schooling. In the 10 years preceding the late war the number of pupils in the eighth, ninth and tenth grades of secondary schools in the RSFSR increased 23 time over. In the villages the increase was even greater - 63 times.

** ** **

SOVIET children in elementary and secondary schools are taught by 1,027,000 teachers. Teachers are trained in nearly 200 specialised institutes. There are pedagogical schools in all parts of the country, even in the Far North beyond the Arctic Circle.

In 1914 there was a total of 91 higher educational institutic on the territory of what is now the Soviet Union. In 1946 there wer 792.

** ** **

THERE was less than one public library for every 10,000 inhaibtants in Russia in 1914. By 1929 there were two, and by 1939, five. But 1939 the USSR had a total of 240,765 public libraries of various kinds.

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A LARGE number of museums and art galleries have been opened in Soviet years. In 1914 there were 149 museums on the territory of the RSFSR, and in 1939, 555. The Ukraine had 18 museums in 1914, and 115 by 1939. In Azerbaijan, which did not have a single musuem in 1914, there were 19 functioning by 1939.

EDUCATION & PUBLIC HEALTH DEPTT.

Submitted for perusal. The letter from the Government of India may be recorded.

T.R.M/19.1.48

M.V.S(ubramanian)/20.1.48
Secretary

T.S.A(vinashilingam Chettiar)/4.2.1948
H.M.(Education)

G.O. (Ms) No. 260 Edn. dated the 6th February 19

Abstract.

EDUCATION - Education for all age in USSR - Cutting from News" - India's letter - Recorded.

/True copy/

R. Thiagarajan

Office Assistant,
Madras Record Office, Egmore.

23/12/53 23/12

Sk.